

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

September 16, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that proposes changes to the E-Rate program. Before I address my concerns with the proposed changes, I want to express my gratitude for your past and continued support for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program has provided critical discounts to the Crosby-Ironton I.S.D. #182 to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

I.S.D. #182 is a small, rural school with a population of 1075 students, pk-12, located in north central Minnesota. The percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunches is approximately 60%.

There can be little, if any, doubt that the E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this process of potentially changing the parameters of E-Rate, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works and that any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential. The current program, while needing some marginal updates to its structure, is most strained by increasing demand for E-Rate-supported services and persistently low funding. The single most effective step the FCC can take to bolster E-Rates current and future success is to provide \$5 billion in funding, an amount commensurate with current demand.

There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: inadequate funding.

I think this process of rulemaking is an opportunity to tackle the important work of expanding a successful program. E-Rate is not a broken program that needs to be fixed; it is a successful program that schools and libraries continue to rely on, a program that must continue to provide funding critical for telecommunications and connectivity. To this end, please know that the Crosby-Ironton I.S.D. #182 relies heavily on the funds it receives through the existing e-rate program to offset costs in the area of technology connectivity and telecommunications. A reduction or elimination to this program would be devastating to our school district. It would greatly diminish our school district's ability to pay for expenditures traditionally offset by E-Rate, with other school funds that are used to put teachers in front of students.

Thank you for considering this response as you move forward with your decision on the E-Rate program. I applaud the FCC for its continued efforts to protect the already oversubscribed E-Rate program by ensuring the future of this successful program. I urge you to support significant increased funding for the E-Rate program, and to ensure that the program and its limited resources are protected and preserved.

Sincerely,

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